

Watson, Harry

Drawer 19A

Artists-W

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# Artists of Abraham Lincoln portraits

Harry Watson

Excerpts from newspapers and other  
sources

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## BOYHOOD PAINTING OF LINCOLN

*Compiled by HERBERT WELLS FAY, Custodian Lincoln's Tomb*

One of the striking oil paintings shown in the Royal Academy of London in year 1905, has an incident in the life of Abraham Lincoln for its theme. The youthful Lincoln is shown at his mother's knee in their log cabin home. She is reading from a book telling how men become great in various ways and he soliloquizes, "What they did I too may do," which is the title of the picture by Harry Watson, an English artist.

A three column reproduction of the painting was printed in the Chicago Tribune of May 16, 1905. I at once wrote to James Keeley, managing editor, asking for a copy of the photograph from which their drawing had been made and received the following reply:

Chicago, June 1, 1905

H. W. Fay, DeKalb, Ill.

Dear Sir: In response to your request, I enclose herewith the drawing from which The Tribune's cut of Harry Watson's painting was made.

Yours truly,

J. KEELEY.

Managing Editor.

Enclosed was a superb wash drawing about 10x12. From this drawing lantern slides were made for Jane Addams, Rev. Jenkins, Lloyd Jones, the Old South Church, Boston; Ida Vose Woodbury, the Lincoln lecturer, and my own slide collection, and it has been shown from Maine to Van Couver.

**Sends His Own Photograph**

Nine years later I received the following letter

Chicago Herald.

Oct. 12, 1914.

H. W. Fay, The DeKalk Review,  
DeKalb, Illinois.

My Dear Sir: In response to your request of October 7th, I am enclosing herewith my photograph.

Yours very truly,

J. KELLEY.

**Magazine Uses It.**

**The Reader's Magazine of January,**

1936, reproduced a cut of the Harry Watson painting of the boyhood Lincoln.

**Mr. Keeley Dies**

About thirty years afterwards, June 7, 1934, the Springfield Register published a seventeen line item giving notice of Mr. Keeley's death, and on June 8, 1934, the Springfield Daily Journal gave the following dispatch:

"Chicago, June 7—AP)—James Keeley, noted Chicago editor whose scoops afield and coups from the managerial desk of The Chicago Tribune brought him world wide fame, died today of a cerebral hemorrhage after months of failing health. He was born at London, England, 66 years ago.

"Since 1922 he had been assistant to the present, and latterly vice president of the Pullman company in charge of public relations. For a time he was advertising counselor of some of the large meat packers.

"But it was as managing editor of The Tribune at the turn of the century that Keeley made journalistic history.

"He astonished fellow editors when the Iroquois theatre burned with a loss of 575 lives in December, 1903, by publishing on his front page the entire death list. To the inside pages he relegated the story of the catastrophe, believing Chicago readers were primarily interested in the names of the dead.

"He began his newspaper work with reportorial assignments at Kansas City, Kan., Memphis and Louisville. Earlier he had been a newsboy in London. He came to Chicago in the late eighties, got a job as police reporter on The Tribune and hoisted himself through the editorial hierarchy to managing editor and general manager.

"In 1914 he quit The Tribune to be a publisher himself, buying the Record-Herald and Inter-Ocean and combining them, but he assumed the title of editor and brought W. W. Chapin of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer and the San Francisco



Call to be publisher of the Chicago Herald. He sold the paper to William Randolph Hearst in 1918 and it became the Chicago Herald and Examiner of today."

The Chicago Tribune of June 7, 1934, published a two column cut of Mr. Keeley and a column notice of the death of this versatile gentleman, who at one time served the paper as its managing editor.

#### After Fifty Years

The Chicago Daily News of March 18, 1933, prints a three column cut of Mr. Keeley on the occasion of his residence for fifty years in Chicago. A hundred friends gave him a dinner on this occasion.

#### His Family

In 1895 Mr. Keeley married Gertrude E. Small who died in 1927. Mr. Keeley endowed a memorial hospital department in her honor.

Mr. Keeley was very proud of his three daughters. Dorothy married Graham Aldis and articles by Dorothy Aldis often appear in the public print. His daughter Peggy is Mrs. Cabot Brown of San Francisco, and Ruth is the wife of Luther Hammond, Jr., of Lake Forest. There are nine grandchildren and their pictures have long adorned the Keeley office in the Pullman building.

#### The Funeral

The funeral service was held June 9, 1934, at his home 390 East Wisconsin avenue, Lake Forest. Rev. Dudley S. Stark, rector of St. Chrysostom church officiating, and he was buried at Grace-land.

#### Another Tribute

Under a cut in an eastern magazine, December, 1909, is printed the following:

"James Keeley—one of the greatest news editors of the world. Mr. Keeley has been managing editor of The Chicago Tribune for eleven years. It was he who first began to collect and publish national statistics on the accidents and deaths which follow Fourth of July celebrations. If the movement for a 'Sane Fourth' become general, as seems probable, we can thank Keeley."

James Keeley in addition to his fame in many activities, deserves additional credit for having discovered the English idea of the boyhood appearance of Abraham Lincoln. All the pictures of the world here showing him prior to his election to congress are purely imaginative. They are the artist's conception, and valuable only with that understanding.

#### Lincoln Display

As a proper display for historic occasions the writer has prepared about forty panoramic albums, a foot high and some forty feet long. They cover such attractions as the different pictures of Lincoln's family, documents, letters, articles he own, pictures of his most people associated with him, the names of books he read and answers to 5,000 questions asked about Lincoln.

The exhibit has usually been shown on ten-foot plaster board sheets borrowed from the lumber yard and spread over church pews, between tables, saw horses, or theatre seats. The pictures are displayed three deep and the one in front along, viewing the sections of most interest. Exhibits have been made in about a dozen states, at churches, commencements, schools, libraries, clubs, etc. They can arrange a display for three days to a week for about half what a Lincoln orator of any note would get for an hour's talk. Any one interested should admit the square feet of space (3x10 ft.) that they can give, the time and terms will be submitted. Lincoln is good any day of the year.

Address Herbert Wells Fay, Custodian Lincoln's Tomb, Springfield, Illinois.

#### Help The Cause

Pass this copy to some Lincoln collector or some out of town library. The history of over twenty different pictures from the Meserve collection has been published in the Week by Week in the past few months. They are needed for reference by every Lincoln collector interested in pictures of the great emancipator. Other records will be presented during the next few months in this publication which costs \$2.00 a year.





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